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ABSTRACT

In this K-8 writing skills curriculum, developed in Skokie (Illinois), the objectives are presented in a "mastery" format so that student achievement can be assessed. The document begins with a statement of philosophy, and guidelines for teachers to use in implementing the program, and then describes the curriculum format, which focuses on the concepts of introducing, emphasizing, mastering, and reinforcing a skill. Lists of objectives accompany the charts for each of the skills: sentence and paragraphing skills, letter writing skills, oral message skills, descriptive skills, narrative skills, explanatory skills, persuasive skills, and editing and proofreading skills. Each objective is then listed separately, followed by a "writing prompt" or exercise and scoring criteria. The writing prompts in the document are to be used by the teacher as tests following instruction. (EL)

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K-8 WRITING SKILLS CURRICULUM

Developed by the Staff of
Skokie, Illinois School District #68

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CS 208979

K-8 WRITING SKILLS CURRICULUM

Introduction

Following is the District 68 Writing Skills Curriculum as developed by a faculty-administration committee during 1979-82. Mrs. B. J. Wagner, faculty member of National College of Education in Evanston, has been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. Her advice has been helpful in developing objectives, designating grade placement for mastery, and planning for program implementation.

Statement of Philosophy

The language arts program of District 68 is based on the District goals that each student:

Possesses the necessary intellectual tools to understand, appreciate and cope with the world in which he lives.

Communicates ideas and feelings effectively.

Acquires and uses the tools of learning.

Participates in forms of creative expression.

Develops and uses standards for critical judgment.

To develop the communication tools necessary for effective living, students participate in an integrated language arts program learning to express through writing and speaking while also developing reading and listening skills. Writing is but one of four areas of linguistic development. Only the integration of all four will provide students with the educational tools needed to develop effective communication skills.

This program organizes objectives in a "mastery" format so that student achievement can be assessed. Because of its mastery nature, the curriculum does not directly reflect the equally important aesthetic/affective goals of the language arts program - the continuous growth, stimulation, encouragement and appreciation of creative, reflective, and judgmental written expression. However, as implemented, the language arts program reflects this commitment to develop the total potentialities of each student.

The following assumptions, held by members of the committee, are guidelines to be used as teachers develop and implement the total writing program.

1. Daily writing is suggested.

2. Prewriting experiences such as brainstorming, using metaphors and analogies, role-playing, discussing, and reading help students learn to write better.

3. Frequency of writing in and of itself is not all that is needed for improvement in writing. In the upper grades, greater emphasis should be given to the guiding and careful development of selected papers by direct methods of

instruction. Solving communication problems before and during the writing process, rather than a hurried production of many papers, is important.

4. A relationship exists between increased reading and improved writing.

5. After the primary grades, the process of revision is critical in improving writing. Students who learn how to revise and are required to do so write better than those who do not.

6. Peer suggestions and editing are useful techniques in helping students identify and remediate their writing problems.

7. While the study of formal grammar may be useful in and of itself, it is not a substitute for the practice of writing.

8. Student writing will improve most of all when there is a general emphasis on writing across the curriculum.

9. The provision of real audiences provides focus and purpose for student writers.

Curriculum Format

The District writing curriculum is organized by types of writing expressed in measureable objectives. Each objective is labeled by grade level where introduction, emphasis, mastery, and reinforcement is expected to occur.

I - Introduction - This skill is introduced for the first time to 70 to 80 percent of all students at the grade level. Complex extensions of the skill may be introduced later.

E - Emphasis - Skills are diagnosed, instruction is based on diagnosis, and increased practice is given.

M - Mastery - The learning of each skill is so thorough as to require only a minimum review the following year. Evidence of mastery is a correct response to an appropriate writing prompt. The designation of a skill as a mastery skill for a particular grade level in no way precludes introduction at an earlier grade level nor subsequent review to maintain mastery.

R - Reinforcement - The concept is reinforced at this grade level.

In the evaluation materials to be distributed to teachers, a "prompt" to be used to elicit student writing follows each objective so that teachers can evaluate the mastery of objectives for their designated grade levels. The prompts are not to be used as activities for teaching the objectives, but are to be administered each spring as tests.

Teachers are to design appropriate classroom strategies for teaching these skills, including standard usage. In most cases, the approach may be informal coaching as the student writes; in some cases, it may be a formal lesson presented to the whole class.

District Performance Standards

The mastery expectation percentage levels are to be determined after a year of piloting this program. Experience will assist the Task Force in establishing the percentage of a grade level expected to achieve mastery.

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October, 1982

A - SENTENCE AND PARAGRAPHING SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. A student can write one complete sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and end punctuation.		I	EM	R	—	—	—	—	→
2. A student can write three or more complete sentences on a given topic, using correct beginning capitalization and end punctuation.		I	E	E	M	R	—	—	→
3. A student can write a compound sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and internal and end punctuation						I	E	E	M
4. A student can write a complex sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and internal and end punctuation.							I	E	M
5. A student can write a paragraph that contains a variety of sentence types (compound and complex).							I	E	M
6. A student can write two or more related paragraphs, of at least three sentences each, on a given topic.				I	E	M	R	—	→

Page 1

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - A-1

A student can write one complete sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and and punctuation.

WRITING PROMPT

Write a sentence. Use the word "dog" in that sentence. Begin and end your sentence correctly.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written a sentence that:

1. has a subject and a verb,
2. begins with a capital letter,
3. ends with a period or an exclamation point.

OBJECTIVE - A-2

A student can write three or more complete sentences on a given topic, using correct beginning capitalization and end punctuation.

WRITING PROMPT

Write three or more sentences that tell about springtime. Be sure you begin and end your sentences correctly.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written three or more complete sentences on the given topic, using correct beginning capitalization and end punctuation in each.

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - A-3

A student can write a compound sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and internal and end punctuation. (Tested in F-2 and G-2)

OBJECTIVE - A-4

A student can write a complex sentence, using correct beginning capitalization and internal and end punctuation. (Tested in F-2 and G-2)

OBJECTIVE - A-5

A student can write a paragraph of three or more sentences that contains a variety of sentence types (compound and complex). (Tested in F-2 and G-2)

OBJECTIVE - A-6

A student can write two or more related paragraphs of at least three sentences each, on a given topic.

WRITING PROMPT

In two or more related paragraphs, each at least three sentences long, tell how you would like to spend a day off from school.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written two paragraphs of at least three sentences each on the given topic.

JPL:lb 12/09/83

B - LETTER WRITING SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. In writing a thank you note, a student can mention gift and express gratitude.		I	E	M	R		→	→	→
2. In addressing an envelope, a student can give complete address and return address information in proper form (correct capitalization and punctuation).			I	E	M	R	→	→	→
3. In writing a business letter to request merchandise or catalog, a student can state what is to be sent, to whom, and where (latter information may be included in heading and signature, rather than stated in body of letter).					I	E	E	M	R
4 In writing a complete, written invitation in letter form, a student can state what is happening, when, where, why, and by or for whom and can properly capitalize greeting, closing and signature and put in proper order.					I	E	M	R	→
5 In writing a business letter to complain or to request exchange of merchandise or a refund, a student can courteously state which merchandise, the reason for returning, specification of refund or exchange, and the name and address of the person to whom it is to be sent.						I	E	M	R

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - B-1

In writing a thank you note, a student can mention gift and express gratitude.

WRITING PROMPT

For your birthday, your Aunt Ellen sent you the game you've been wanting. Write her a note to thank her and name the game.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written a thank you note that:

1. mentions the game.
2. expresses gratitude.

OBJECTIVE - B-2

In addressing an envelope, a student can give complete address and return address information in proper form (correct capitalization and punctuation).

WRITING PROMPT

Address an envelope to your mother or father. Use your own name and the school address as the return address. Be sure to put all necessary information in the correct order and to capitalize and punctuate it properly.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has properly addressed an envelope, giving the complete address and return address information in proper form (correct capitalization and punctuation).

Return Address:
Tracy L. Taylor
9040 Kostner Avenue
Skokie, IL (or Ill.) 60076

Mailing Address:
Mr. or Mrs. Donald Bennett (or Mary or Donald Bennett)
9300 Kenton Avenue
Skokie, IL (or Ill.) 60076

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - B-3

In writing a business letter to request merchandise or catalog, a student can state what is to be sent, to whom, and where (latter information may be included in heading and signature, rather than stated in body of letter). (Tested in B-5)

OBJECTIVE - B-4

In writing a complete, written invitation in letter form, a student can state what is happening, when, where, why, and by or for whom and can properly capitalize greeting, closing and signature and put in proper order.

WRITING PROMPT

Your class is having an Art Fair to display the things you've been making and drawing in art class. Your teacher has asked you to write an invitation to your parent(s). Make up a date, time of day, and place for the Art Fair and tell this to your parent(s) in your invitation.

SCORING CRITERIA: In writing the invitation, student has:

1. capitalized the proper words in the greeting, closing, and signature and put in proper order,

2. stated what is happening, when, and where.

JPL:lb 12/09/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - B-5

In writing a business letter to complain or to request exchange of merchandise or a refund, a student can courteously state which merchandise, the reason for returning, spec fication of refund or exchange, and the name and address of the person to whom it is to be sent.

WRITING PROMPT

A new cassette tape you've just purchased has an obvious muffled tone about 1/3 of the way into the first side. Since you ordered it through a mail order catalog, you now need to write them a letter explaining the problem and requesting that it be replaced. Use the proper business format in your letter and make up the name and address of the company.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has clearly stated:

1. which merchandise is being returned,
2. why,
3. that an exchange is needed,
4. to whom and where to send the exchange.

(This information may be included in letter form rather than stated in the body of the letter.)

C - ORAL MESSAGE SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. After hearing a phone message, a student can write the following information: who called, when, whom message is for, and message.				I	E	M	R	→	→
2. A student can take notes on simple, dictated instructions.						I	E	E	M

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - C-1

After hearing a phone message, a student can write the following information: who called, when, whom message is for, and message.

WRITING PROMPT - THIS PROMPT SHOULD ONLY BE READ ALOUD TWICE - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

Sometimes you have to take a phone message for someone. Pretend this is one of those times and get a pencil and paper ready to take the information down.

It's Sunday night. The telephone rings and you answer it. A lady asks for your mother. She isn't home and you tell the lady this. She says, "Please ask your mother to call me back. I'm Mrs. Stone, and I need to find out if she can drive the Scouts to the park next Saturday. My number is 555-1212." Write the message.

SCORING CRITERIA: After hearing a phone message, student has written the following information:

1. who called - Mrs. Stone
2. whom message is for - Mother
3. message - call Mrs. Stone at 555-1212
4. when the caller called

OBJECTIVE - C-2

A student can take notes on simple, dictated instructions.

WRITING PROMPT - THIS PROMPT SHOULD BE READ ALOUD ONLY TWICE - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

I want you to take notes as you listen to me. Write down important points on how to plant corn in a garden.

1. Prepare the soil, so it is soft and easy to handle. Use a hoe to break up lumps and to make the soil loose.
2. Make a little hill of soil about four inches high and make a hole with your finger in the top of it.
3. Place two corn seeds in the hole you made with your finger and cover the seeds with dirt.
4. Water the hill every day to keep it moist and in about two weeks, you'll see the beginnings of a corn stalk.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has included in his/her notes each of six steps, mentioning the main idea in each step:

Title: PLANTING CORN

1. prepare soil 2. make hill and hole 3. put seeds in hole 4. water

JPL:lb 12/09/83

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Using complete sentences, a student can describe the physical appearance of an object, person, or place by giving at least three details (size, shape, color, or texture).		I	E	E	M	R	→	→	→
2. In a coherent paragraph of at least four sentences, a student can describe the physical appearance of an object, person, or place by elaborating on at least two or more physical characteristics.			I	E	E	M	R	→	→
3. Using complete sentences, a student can describe a person's (including his own) feelings about or reactions to a situation or event.			I	E	E	M	R	→	→
4. In a coherent paragraph of at least four sentences, a student can describe the character (behavior and/or attitude) of a person by identifying the person and by elaborating on at least two distinct personality or character traits.						I	E	M	R

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - D-1

Using complete sentences, a student can describe the physical appearance of an object, person, or place by giving at least three details (size, shape, color, or texture).

WRITING PROMPT

Think of a toy you have received. Describe the toy, using complete sentences. Include at least three different things about how it looks; for example, size, shape, color, or texture.

SCORING CRITERIA: Using complete sentences, student has described the physical appearance of an object by giving at least three details of size, shape, color, texture.

OBJECTIVE - D-2

In a coherent paragraph of at least four sentences, a student can describe the physical appearance of an object, person, or place by elaborating on at least two or more physical characteristics.

WRITING PROMPT

Your family is moving and now you are going to have a bedroom for just yourself. Write a paragraph of at least four sentences, describing how you would like your room to look. (You may tell about walls, furniture, lights, closet, floor, etc.)

SCORING CRITERIA: In a paragraph of at least four sentences, student has described his/her bedroom by elaborating on at least two physical characteristics of the room or its furnishings.

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - D-3

Using complete sentences, a student can describe a person's (including his own) feelings about or reactions to a situation or event.

WRITING PROMPT

You are having a birthday party. While opening presents, your family shouts 'surprise' and in walks a little puppy. Using complete sentences, tell how you would feel when you see the puppy.

SCORING CRITERIA: Using complete sentences, student has described his/her own feelings about or reactions to the situation described.

OBJECTIVE - D-4

In a coherent paragraph of at least four sentences, a student can describe the character (behavior and/or attitude) of a person by identifying the person and by elaborating on at least two distinct personality or character traits.

WRITING PROMPT

Think of one of your favorite TV or comic characters. In a coherent paragraph of at least four sentences tell what kind of person he or she is and give examples of how he or she behaves.

SCORING CRITERIA: In a paragraph of at least four sentences, student has described the character (behavior and/or attitude) of the subject: 1) identifying the subject, and 2) elaborating on at least two distinct personality or character traits.

E - NARRATIVE SKILLS

(BIOGRAPHICAL AND FICTIONAL STORY TELLING)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. A student can write an account of what happened or what may have happened to himself or someone else.		I	E	M	R	—	—	—	→
2. In writing a story, a student can describe the setting (time and place), invent a problem, devise a solution, construct a plot around the problem, sequence and close the story, and sustain the tense appropriately.					I	E	M	R	→
3. In writing a story, a student can use, punctuate, and indicate by indenting dialogue properly.					I	E	E	M	R

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - E-1

A student can write an account of what happened or what may have happened to himself or someone else.

WRITING PROMPT

Think about a day in school. Write a short story about a day in school. Tell about at least three things that happen.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written an account of his/her personal experience of a day in school by telling three things that happen.

OBJECTIVE - E-2

In writing a story, a student can describe the setting (time and place), invent a problem, devise a solution, construct a plot around the problem, sequence and close the story, and sustain the tense appropriately.

WRITING PROMPT

Write a story about an onion (or other vegetable) with a serious problem. In your story, be sure to do the following: 1) tell where and when your story takes place, 2) describe the place so that someone who reads your story can imagine what it would look like, 3) tell what the vegetable's problem is, and 4) tell how the vegetable solves the problem.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written a story in which she/he has described the setting (time and place) of the action, has invented a problem for the main "character," devised a solution, constructed a plot around the problem, sequenced and closed the story, and sustained the tense appropriately.

JPL:lb 12/09/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - E-3

In writing a story, a student can use, punctuate, and indicate by indenting dialogue properly.

WRITING PROMPT

The week before Halloween the ghosts who live in the haunted house are making plans for scaring children as they are trick-or-treating. Write down the conversation the ghosts are having. Be sure to punctuate the dialogue correctly and to put in the correct paragraph breaks.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written dialogue and has properly punctuated and paragraphed it.

e.g., "I can hardly wait for Halloween," said Spooky to Gasp.

"Neither can I!" replied Gasp. "What shall we plan for the big event?"

F - EXPLANATORY SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. A student can write specific directions for getting from one place to another.						I E	M	R	R
2. A student can write an explanation of a simple process, action, or procedure giving at least three details or steps in a logical sequence.							I	E	M

Page 16

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - F-1

A student can write specific directions for getting from one place to another.

WRITING PROMPT

You are planning a treasure hunt. Write directions for going from the main office to the art room, the B-level gym, and the cafeteria.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written specific directions for getting from one place to another.

OBJECTIVE - F-2

A student can write an explanation of a simple process, action, or procedure giving at least three details or steps in a logical sequence.

WRITING PROMPT

There is a new student who has never borrowed a book from your school library. Write an explanation of how it is done, giving at least three steps in logical order. Use at least one compound sentence and underline it once; use at least one complex sentence and underline it twice. Use appropriate capitalization, punctuation, and spelling rules.

SCORING CRITERIA:
1. Student has written precise directions giving at least three steps in sequential order.
2. Student has used at least one compound and one complex sentence.
3. Student has observed appropriate capitalization, punctuation, and spelling rules.

G - PERSUASIVE SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. In a coherent paragraph, a student can state a position or opinion on a given topic and support it with three or more specific reasons.					I	E	M	R	→
2. A student can state a position or opinion on a given topic and support it with one elaborated reason or two or more unelaborated reasons.							I	E	M

Page 18

10/82
12/83

WRITING PROMPTS

OBJECTIVE - G-1

In a coherent paragraph, a student can state a position or opinion on a given topic and support it with three or more specific reasons.

WRITING PROMPT

Your parents are considering increasing your allowance but will not do so until they are convinced that such an increase is necessary.

In a coherent paragraph, explain why your allowance should be increased. Make sure your paragraph includes a topic sentence and at least three reasons supporting it.

SCORING CRITERIA: Student has written a coherent paragraph that includes a topic sentence and at least three reasons supporting the main idea.

OBJECTIVE - G-2

A student can state a position or opinion on a given topic and support it with one elaborated reason or two or more unelaborated reasons.

WRITING PROMPT:

The Student Senate is considering having a Friday night dance or an after-school roller skating party. Which would you prefer? State your opinion and support it with at least one fully elaborated reason, or two or more unelaborated reasons. Use at least one compound sentence and underline it once; use at least one complex sentence and underline it twice. Use appropriate capitalization, punctuation, and spelling rules.

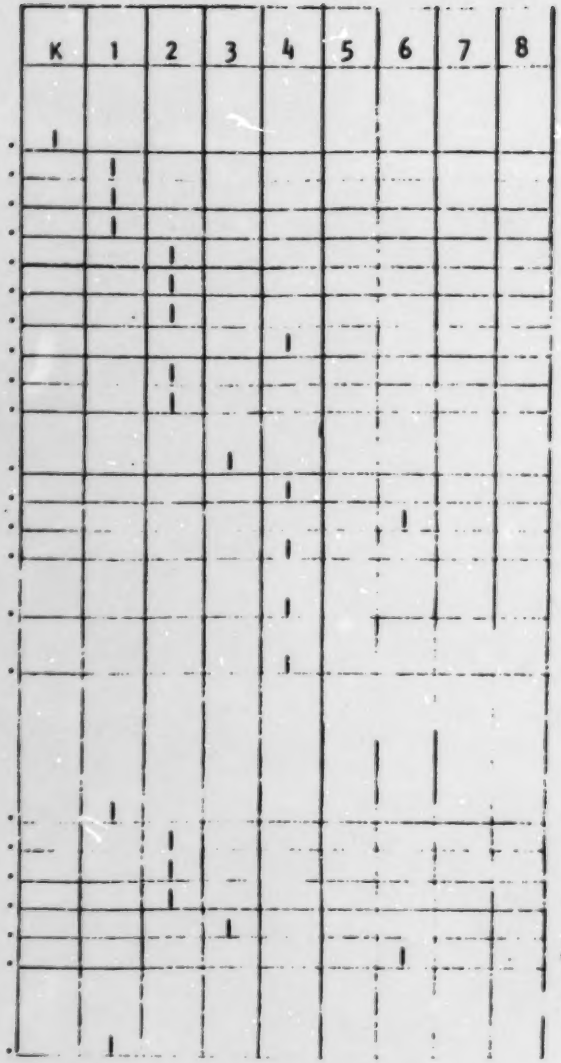
SCORING CRITERIA: Student has:

1. stated a position or opinion on the given topic,
2. supported it with one elaborated reason or two or more unelaborated reasons;
3. used at least one compound and one complex sentence,
4. used appropriate capitalization, punctuation, and spelling rules.

H - EDITING AND PROOFREADING SKILLS

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
In his or her own writing, a student can correct errors in:									
(a) punctuation									
(b) capitalization									
(c) spelling									
(d) usage (verb form, agreement, pronouns, etc.)									
(e) word omissions									
(f) paragraphing									
Student mastery in editing and proofreading is expected after the skill is mastered in writing.		SEE APPENDIX - next three pages							

10/82



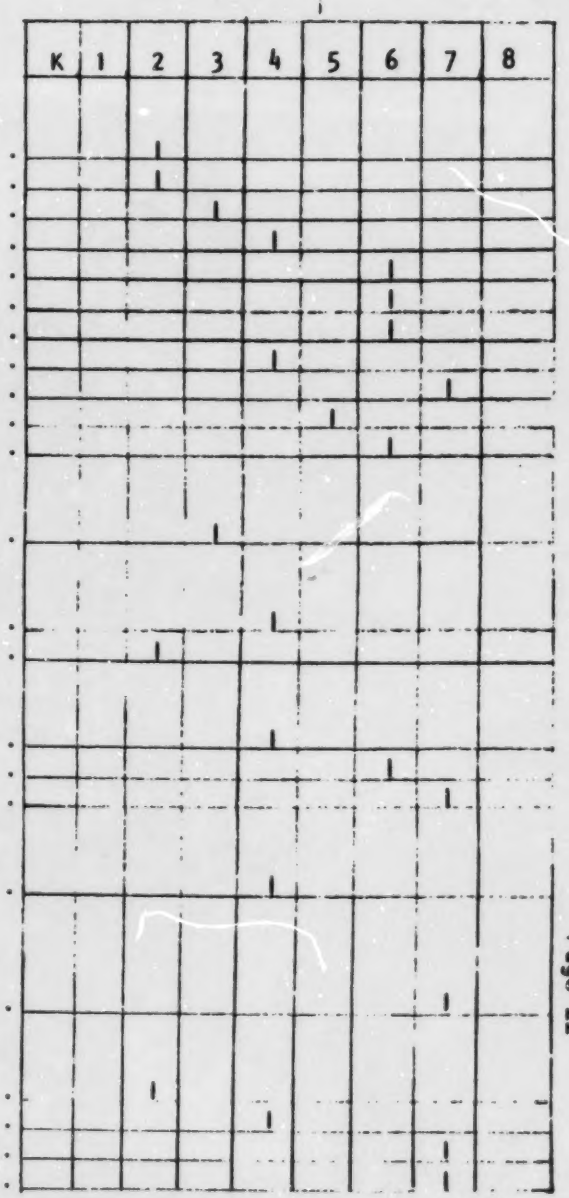
CAPITALS

1. First letter of own name
2. First letter of a sentence
3. Names of people and pets
4. The pronoun "I".
5. Names of months, days, and special days
6. Names of streets, cities, and countries
7. Names of titles of respect (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)
8. Relationships used as a name (Mother, Grandmother)
9. First letter of first word of greeting and closing of a letter
10. Initials
11. First words and important words in titles of stories, books, poems, movies, plays, magazine articles, and student themes
12. First word of a quotation
13. First word of each topic of outline
14. Direction words (geographical locations Midwest, North, etc.)
15. Geographical names - rivers, lakes, roads, highways, continents, people, tribes, schools, parks, etc.
16. Other proper names - products, trains, buses, companies, aircraft, nationalities, etc.

PUNCTUATION

A. PERIOD
   1. End of a sentence that tells something
   2. After numbers in a numbered list
   3. After initials
   4. Abbreviations of titles of respect
   5. Other abreviations (St., Ave.)
   6. After Roman numerals and letters used in an outline or list

B. QUESTION MARK
   1. At the end of an asking sentence



C. COMMA
1. After greeting and closing in a letter
2. In a date - Tuesday, January 9, 1985
3. Between city and state in an address
4. Introductory words (yes, no, oh, well)
5. In setting off words of address and appositives (John, sit down)
6. After year when complete date is used in a sentence
7. After city and state used in a sentence (Skokie, Illinois)
8. After lists and series of three or more items
9. After introductory dependent clause
10. In setting off quotations from rest of sentence
11. Before conjunctions when separating two independent clauses

D. EXCLAMATION POINTS
1. After word or sentence of exclamation

E. APOSTROPHE
1. Possessives
2. Contractions

F. QUOTATION MARKS
1. Direct discourse
2. Short literary selection (, em, short story) in a sentence
3. Single quotes for quotations within a quotation

G. UNDERLINING
1. Name of a book

H. SEMICOLON
1. Used between two main clauses, not joined by and, but, or, nor or for

I. COLON
1. In the writing of time
2. After greeting in a business letter
3. To introduce a series of list
4. In plays after the name of speaker

Page 22

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
J. HYPHEN									
1. To divide word at end of line					I				
2. In hyphenated words								I	
USAGE									
1. Agreement of two essential parts in number						I			
2. Standard Usage:									
Noun				I					
Pronoun						I			
Verb				I					
Adjective							I		
Adverb							I		
HANDWRITING									
A. Manuscript - D'Nealian									
1. Lower and upper cases		I							
2. Alignment and spacing		I							
B. Cursive									
1. Lower and upper cases				I					
2. Alignment and spacing				I					
3. Uniform slant				I					
PARAGRAPHING									
1. Indenting or double spacing				I					